
Introduced by Senator Wolk

February 24, 2010

Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 80—Relative to Lyme Disease Awareness Month.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SCR 80, as introduced, Wolk. Lyme Disease Awareness Month.

This measure would proclaim the month of May 2010 as Lyme Disease Awareness Month.

Fiscal committee: no.

1 WHEREAS, Lyme disease is an often-misunderstood illness
2 that can cause serious health problems if it is not caught early and
3 properly treated; and

4 WHEREAS, Lyme disease is a bacterial infection caused by the
5 spirochete *Borrelia burgdorferi* and is primarily transmitted by the
6 bite of an infected tick. The disease was first identified in North
7 America in the 1970s in Lyme, Connecticut, for which it was
8 named, and since that time, the disease has since been found in all
9 50 of the United States. The reach of Lyme disease is global,
10 having been reported in more than 50 countries on six continents
11 and several islands; and

12 WHEREAS, Lyme disease is a complex, multisystem illness.
13 Early signs of infection may include rash and flu-like symptoms,
14 including fever, muscle aches, headaches, and fatigue. Usually,
15 the disease responds well to prompt treatment with appropriate
16 antibiotics. If untreated or inadequately treated, however, Lyme
17 disease can invade multiple organs of the body, including the brain
18 and nervous system. In those instances, patients can become

1 increasingly disabled over time, suffering crippling muscle and
2 joint pain, neurological impairment, psychological disorders, and
3 a host of other symptoms that can lead to financial hardship, job
4 loss, broken families, increased numbers of people on disability
5 or welfare, and even death; and

6 WHEREAS, Since there is no reliable form of testing that can
7 accurately pinpoint Lyme disease, getting a proper diagnosis and
8 prompt treatment is often extremely difficult; and

9 WHEREAS, According to the Centers for Disease Control and
10 Prevention (CDC) statistics, an average of 22,000 new cases of
11 Lyme disease are reported in the United States each year. The
12 CDC, however, estimates that more than 90 percent of Lyme
13 disease cases are not reported, suggesting a total of approximately
14 220,000 cases a year. This total is about five times the number of
15 new AIDS cases per year. Up to 40 percent of Lyme disease cases
16 result in long-term health problems, suggesting approximately
17 88,000 patients annually; and

18 WHEREAS, Ticks have three life stages: larval, nymphal, and
19 adult, and both nymphs and adults can transmit diseases to humans.
20 Ticks attach themselves to host animals such as deer, rodents, and
21 birds, and as the host animals migrate to new areas, so do the ticks.
22 Most people who contract Lyme disease get it from the bite of a
23 nymphal tick and because nymphs are as small as poppy seeds and
24 their bite is painless, many people do not notice or remove them.
25 The longer a tick is attached to the body, the more likely it will
26 transmit whatever diseases it carries; and

27 WHEREAS, In California, the Lyme disease bacterium is
28 transmitted by the western blacklegged tick (*Ixodes pacificus*).
29 Ticks are active year round, especially when it is wet; thus, this
30 tick is most common in the coastal regions and along the western
31 slope of the Sierra Nevada range, but has been found in 56 of
32 California's 58 counties; and

33 WHEREAS, In some areas of California, Lyme disease infection
34 rates of nymphal ticks have been found to be as high as 42 percent;
35 thus, the infection rate in certain regions of California is among
36 the highest in the entire United States. However, since some areas
37 of the state have not been tested for tick infection, the true scope
38 of the problem is not known; and

39 WHEREAS, Although Lyme disease is the most common
40 vector-borne infection in the United States, the ticks that spread

1 Lyme disease can also spread other diseases at the same time.
2 Among these coinfections are diseases such as babesiosis,
3 anaplasmosis, and ehrlichiosis. The presence of coinfections can
4 complicate the treatment of Lyme disease; and

5 WHEREAS, Recently, three new borrelial species belonging to
6 the Lyme disease spirochetal complex have been described, thus
7 increasing the number of these bacteria known to occur in
8 California to five and making California the locus of more distinct
9 borrelia species than any other geographical region in the United
10 States; and

11 WHEREAS, The Legislature finds that this disease presents a
12 health threat to Californians; now, therefore, be it

13 *Resolved by the Senate of the State of California, the Assembly*
14 *thereof concurring*, That the Legislature hereby proclaims the
15 month of May 2010 as Lyme Disease Awareness Month; and be
16 it further

17 *Resolved*, That the Secretary of the Senate transmit copies of
18 this resolution to the author for appropriate distribution.